Reading 8-Boxes

Reading 8-Boxes are a wonderful instruction tool outlined in Lisa Donahue’s book **Independent Reading Inside the Box** – *How to organize, observe, and assess reading strategies that promote deeper thinking and improve comprehension in K-6 classrooms*. It is a wonderful resource for any classroom ☺

**Reading 8-Boxes:**

* a simple organizational tool made from a 11x17 piece of paper that is divided into eight equal parts or boxes. In each box, students complete a different task to reflect their understanding of their reading
* Provide the accountability factor for students’ independent reading
* Enable the teacher to address the needs of all students by targeting specific reading skills and integrating graphic organizers
* The versatility of the individual task boxes enables teachers to target a wide range of learning goals
* Students can work to:
  + strengthen their understanding of reading comprehension strategies
  + develop an awareness of text elements for a variety of text forms
  + develop word skills
  + strengthen their comprehension
  + find a purpose for new learning
* Provide students with the much need time to practice, consolidate, and enjoy the skills that are actively taught during instruction
* Different task boxes allow for students to apply new learning to a variety of texts that they have selected themselves
* Gives the teacher countless opportunities to assess students’ learning and thinking, thus allowing him/her to shape instruction purposefully
* Are successful with fiction and non-fiction texts

**Foundational objectives of the Reading 8-Boxes method:**

1. Reading strategies must be actively taught.
2. Students must build their stamina through regular opportunities to engage in and respond purposefully to reading.
3. Focus is maintained when students are actively engaged in their work.
4. Ensuring that the students know the routines and procedures is key to the success of the program.
5. The selection of suitable texts for independent reading empowers students to feel like autonomous readers.

**Lisa Donahue’s book includes:**

* Background and philosophy of the program
* Complete instructions on how to set up Reading 8-Boxes
* Copyable graphic organizers for all components of the program
* Students examples
* Assessment, including rubrics
* An appendix of suggested Reading 8-Boxes

The top four boxes of the Reading 8-Box (see chart below) include one task from each of the following language areas:

* My Reading
* Text Elements
* Word Skills
* Taxonomy of Thinking (based on Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy)

The lower four boxes of the Reading 8-Box (see chart below) include one task each from four of the of the following eight reading strategies:

* Monitoring Understanding
* Connecting
* Questioning
* Visualizing
* Inferring
* Predicting
* Determining Importance
* Synthesizing

It is recommended that you spend the time to teach one box at a time at the onset. It is important to model the process for each box through read alouds. You may want to try it out in your Guided Reading lessons as well. Applying the “gradual release of responsibility” philosophy over a period of time as the students become familiar with the process and your expectations ensures the success of the program.

What it looks like:

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|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **My Reading** | **Text Elements** | **Word Skills** | **Taxonomy of Thinking** |
| **Reading Strategy** | **Reading Strategy** | **Reading Strategy** | **Reading Strategy** |

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## **The Boxes:**

Reading 8-Boxes offers the following choices (graphic organizers are available for each) for activities for each box:

**BOX 1: MY READING**

* Illustration of the favorite part of the story
* Rank It
* Recommendation
* I Love It Because …
* Initial Attraction

**BOX 2: ELEMENTS OF THE TEXT**

* Fiction Texts:
  + Setting: Picture and Sentence
  + Setting: Picture and Evidence
  + Characters – Who’s Who?
  + Character Development (primary students)
  + Character Development (junior students)
  + Character Profile
  + Character Sketch
  + Character Webs
  + Plot – Sequencing Ideas
  + Plot – Chain of Events
  + Plot Graph
  + Title
  + Title Choice
  + Fact or Fiction?
  + Story Map
  + Cover Information
* Non-Fiction Texts:
  + Titles, Labels, Pictures
  + Strengthening Understanding (text features – junior)
  + Strengthening Understanding (text features – primary)
  + New Illustrations

**BOX 3: WORD SKILLS**

* Three Words and Pictures
* Six Words and Pictures
* Word Collector
* Alphabetical Order
* Word Search
* Initial Sound
* Adjectives
* Verbs in Action
* Nouns
* Adjectives, Verbs, and Nouns
* Adverbs
* Adjectives and Adverbs
* Word Choice
* New to Me
* Guess and Check
* Synonyms and Antonyms
* Using the Dictionary and Thesaurus
* Instead of “Said”
* Word Use
* Glossary

**BOX 4: TAXONOMY OF THINKING**

* Remembering: What’s Happening?
* Remembering: Character Identification
* Remembering: Three Main Ideas
* Remembering: The 5 W’s
* Understanding: What’s the Problem?
* Understanding: Summarizing Important Parts
* Understanding: Character Comparison
* Understanding: Three Main Ideas
* Applying: Lessons to Learn
* Applying: What’s Most Important?
* Applying: Plan of Action
* Analyzing: Fiction Facts
* Analyzing: Fiction or Non-Fiction
* Analyzing: Ordering Important Events
* Analyzing: Who’s Most Important?
* Analyzing: PMI Chart
* Evaluating: Interesting Part
* Evaluating: Favorite Part
* Evaluating: Fairness
* Evaluating: “I Disagree!”
* Evaluating: Admirable Character Traits
* Evaluating: Interesting Facts
* Creating: Plot Changes
* Creating: Alternative Solution
* Creating: New Summary
* Creating: “Dear Diary”
* Creating: Who’s Like You?
* Creating: Alternative Action

**BOX 5-8: READING STRATEGIES**

Monitoring Understanding:

* Monitoring Understanding Using Pictures
* Monitoring Understanding: Strategies for Repairing Comprehension
* Monitoring Understanding: Evaluating Text
* Monitoring Understanding: Word Attack and Comprehension
* Monitoring Understanding: Using Rereading and Reading-On
* Monitoring Understanding: Using a Checklist
* Monitoring Understanding: Favorite Fix-Ups
* Monitoring Understanding: Using Prompts

Connecting: Fiction

* Connecting to Personal Experiences
* Connecting to Another Book
* Connecting to a Specific Character
* Connecting Using a Venn Diagram
* Connecting Through Similar Experiences
* Connecting to a Character Through a Similar Experience
* Connecting in a Variety of Ways
* Connecting to Understand a Character’s Actions
* Connecting Using a Web
* Connecting Using a Venn Diagram for a Variety of Connections
* Connection to Specific Text
* Connection Using a Three-Part Diagram

Connecting: Non-Fiction

* Connecting to Specific Facts
* Connecting to Previous Reading
* Connecting to Validate Facts
* Connecting Ideas Within the Text

Questioning: Fiction

* Questioning Using Prompts
* Questioning for Understanding
* Questioning the Characters or Author
* Questioning Using a Web
* Questioning Using a Mind Map
* Questioning and Looking for Answers
* Questioning Various Characters
* Questioning: Before, During, and After Reading
* Questioning: Recording and Reflecting Questions
* Questioning: Raving Reporter
* Questioning: Just One Question
* Questioning: Letter to the Author

Questioning: Non-Fiction

* Questioning for Further Inquiry
* Questioning Chart
* Questioning: FQR
* Questioning: Research Report

Visualizing: Fiction

* Visualizing a Character
* Visualizing a Favorite Character
* Visualizing with Sight and Sound
* Visualizing with Sight, Sound, and Smell
* Visualizing with All Five Senses
* Visualizing: Create a Magazine Advertisement
* Visualizing: Celebrity Characters
* Visualizing a Specific Event

Visualizing: Non-Fiction

* Visualizing: Creating a Diagram
* Visualizing: Looks Like, Sounds Like, Feels Like

Inferring:

* Inferring a Character’s Feelings
* Inferring From a Character’s Actions
* Inferring: Character’s Emotions
* Inferring: Letter in Role
* Inferring a Character’s Thoughts
* Inferring: In a Character’s Shoes
* Inferring: Offering Advice
* Inferring: Lessons Learned

Predicting:

* Predicting at the Climax
* Predicting Using Early Clues
* Predicting: Monitoring Predictions
* Predicting Using Evidence

Determining Importance: Fiction

* Determining Importance: What’s Most Important
* Determining Importance: Retell Key Ideas
* Determining Importance: Sequencing Ideas (primary)
* Determining Importance: Sequencing Ideas (junior)
* Determining Importance: Beginning, Middle, End
* Determining Importance: Three-Frame Comic Strip
* Determining Importance: Six-Frame Comic Strip
* Determining Importance: Understanding Characters
* Determining Importance: Character Traits
* Determining Importance: Conflict and Resolution
* Determining Importance: Three Interesting Things
* Determining Importance: Summary

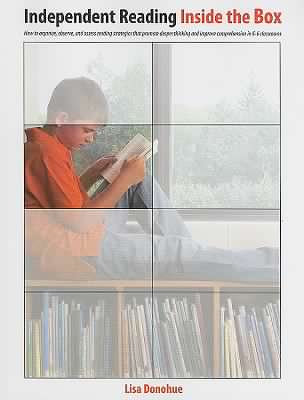
Determining Importance: Non-Fiction:

* Determining Importance: KWL
* Determining Importance: Main Idea and Supporting Details
* Determining Importance: Important Ideas Chart
* Determining Importance: Fact, Evidence, Opinion
* Determining Importance: Fishbone
* Determining Importance: Cause and Effect
* Determining Importance: Fact and Opinion
* Determining Importance: Ranking Ladder

Synthesizing:

* Synthesizing: Lessons Learned
* Synthesizing: Interesting Text
* Synthesizing: Summarizing
* Synthesizing: Character’s Perspective
* Synthesizing: Altering Characters
* Synthesizing: Altering Elements
* Synthesizing: Altering Actions
* Synthesizing: Audience Appeal
* Synthesizing: PMI
* Synthesizing: Back Cover
* Synthesizing: “Hamburger” Paragraph

Lisa Donahue’s book is a great way to engage students in and make them accountable for their independent reading. You could easily create your own activities for the boxes. The students may come up with some wonderful ideas too as you co-create together.

Independent Reading Inside the Box is very affordably priced on Amazon at [http://www.amazon.ca/Independent -Reading-Inside-Lisa-Donahue/dp/1551382253](http://www.amazon.ca/Independent%20-Reading-Inside-Lisa-Donahue/dp/1551382253)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **My Reading** | **Text Elements** | **Word Skills** | **Taxonomy of Thinking** |
| **Reading Strategy** | **Reading Strategy** | **Reading Strategy** | **Reading Strategy** |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Cover Page | Character Development |
| Summarizing | Connecting |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Word Skills | Remembering |
| Inferring | Visualizing |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Cover Page | Text Elements |
| Questioning | Visualizing |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Work Skills | Evaluation |
| Determining Importance | Connecting |